

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 13-77093 in view of Yamagishi (U.S. Patent 6,003,876) and JP 4-89892. For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

The same three references were cited in an obviousness rejection in the parent application (Application No. 09/217,819). In an interview conducted on June 9, 2003 in connection with the parent application, the Examiner agreed that the three references do not disclose the limitations: “an inner diameter of an inner end of said outer ring being larger than an outer diameter of an outer periphery of said metal core member” and “a gap defined between said inner end of said outer ring and said outer periphery of said metal core member” (see the Interview Summary of June 9, 2003). These limitations are also recited in claim 7.

Since the reasons why those limitations are not disclosed by the cited references were fully discussed in the parent application, Applicants will not provide a detailed discussion here. It suffices to say that the references clearly do not teach or suggest certain limitations of claim 7, and, accordingly, the references cannot render claim 7 obvious.

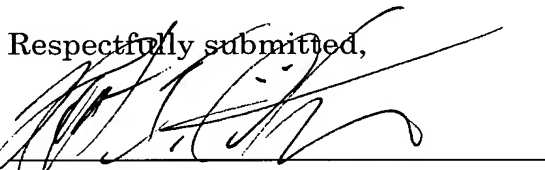
Application No. 10/676,007
Reply dated October 12, 2004
Response to Office Action dated July 23, 2004

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #03891744952C1).

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Respectfully submitted,



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